



NEW YORK LIFE  
FOUNDATION

**For Immediate Release**  
**January 15, 2016**

**Contacts:** Nancy Levesque, NSLA  
[nlevesque@summerlearning.org](mailto:nlevesque@summerlearning.org)  
410-856-1370 ext. 200  
Lacey Siegel, New York Life  
[lacey\\_s\\_siegel@newyorklife.com](mailto:lacey_s_siegel@newyorklife.com)  
212-576-7937

**National Summer Learning Association Seeking Applications from Summer Learning Programs for the 2016 New York Life Foundation Excellence Awards**

*Since 2004, applications from nearly 500 programs serving a combined 442,852 youth offer an unparalleled look at the national summer learning landscape*

Baltimore – The National Summer Learning Association is seeking applications from summer learning programs nationwide for its [New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Awards](#). The Summer Learning Award and Founder’s Award recognize outstanding summer programs that demonstrate excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting healthy development for low-income children and youth between pre-kindergarten and twelfth grade.

[Winning programs](#) demonstrate exemplary practices in overall programming, including professional development for program staff and collaboration with community partners in fulfilling shared goals for student and family engagement. In 2015, NSLA introduced the Founder’s Award which recognizes organizations with onsite and/or virtual programs that occur anytime, anywhere, and blend learning and enrichment to serve youth who otherwise wouldn’t be reached in an effort to fill gaps in underserved communities. The Awards program provides a growing knowledge base that NSLA uses to educate policymakers, funders, media and the public on best practices and standards of quality for summer learning.

Programs who apply are measured against the [Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment](#), developed in partnership with NSLA and the [Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality](#). Applicants are reviewed by NSLA staff in addition to experts in the field. Interviews are conducted with a small group of semi-finalists followed by site visits to a select group of finalists to observe program activities before announcing the awards.

The New York Life Foundation generously awards winning programs up to \$10,000. All programs that submit applications will receive a feedback summary outlining strengths and areas for improvement. Award finalists receive a phone consultation with members of NSLA’s Program Quality Team.

"Since 2004, the Summer Learning Award program has supported the growth and visibility of top-quality summer learning programs in communities nationwide," said Sarah Pitcock, CEO of the National Summer Learning Association. "The best practices that emerge from these award-winning programs hold tremendous promise for improving the quality and impact of the out-of-school time field as a whole."

[Research](#) has established that low-income students are disproportionately at risk to lose academic skills during the summer. While most children lose up to two months of math skills during summer breaks, lower-income children also lose two to three months of reading skills without practice. The cumulative effects of this "summer slide" contribute significantly to the achievement gap, yet only one-third of households report having a child enrolled in a summer learning program. Excellence Award winning programs strive to curb these losses with research-based practices to build 21st Century skills for college and career success.

All summer program models are encouraged to apply for the awards program with a focus in early literacy, health and wellness, college and career readiness, youth leadership and teamwork, and digital learning. Programs or summer learning models (local, state, or national) can apply to the Founder's Award if they operate as a drop-in site or plug-in program used by summer learning programs or are summer-focused. Also eligible are wrap-around programs that do not partner with a traditional site or enrollment-based summer program, but provide learning or enrichment opportunities during the summer.

The deadline to apply is Monday, February 1, 2016. Visit [summerlearning.org/summerexcellence](http://summerlearning.org/summerexcellence) to learn more.

####

*The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works in summer learning, develops and delivers capacity-building offerings and convenes and empowers key actors to embrace summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. For more information, visit [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)*

*Inspired by New York Life's tradition of service and humanity, the New York Life Foundation has, since its founding in 1979, provided \$200 million in charitable contributions to national and local nonprofit organizations. The Foundation supports programs that benefit young people, particularly in the areas of educational enhancement and childhood bereavement. The Foundation also encourages and facilitates the community involvement of employees, agents, and retirees of New York Life through its Volunteers for Good program. To learn more, please visit [www.newyorklifefoundation.org](http://www.newyorklifefoundation.org).*